

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-17 are pending. Claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 8-15 are new. The applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 1 was said to be indefinite for reciting a rectangular solid. Claim 1 has been amended to recite a case having the shape of a generally rectangular box that is open at the top. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Further, the phrase "the legs" in claim 6 was said to lack antecedent basis. Claim 6 has been amended to recite legs without a definite article. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Konoike (JP 2003 095247). The applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 1 now recites, among other things, outer surfaces of the dovetail projections and that surfaces of the dovetail grooves that engage the outer surfaces of the dovetail projections are inclined with respect to the vertical axis, so that engagement of the case with the other identical case requires that the case be moved along a path of engagement that is inclined with respect to the vertical axis, as illustrated in Fig.12 of the present application. This feature is not shown or suggested by Konoike. Therefore, claim 1 cannot be anticipated by Konoike, and this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woodring (US Des. 407,929) and Konoike. The applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Neither Woodring or Konoike discloses or suggests tongue and groove elements such that outer surfaces of dovetail projections and surfaces of dovetail grooves that engage the outer surfaces of the dovetail projections are inclined with respect to the vertical axis, so that engagement of the case with the other identical case requires that the case be moved along a path of engagement that is inclined with respect to the vertical axis. Thus, even if Woodring and Konoike are combined, the terms of claim 1 are not satisfied. Therefore, the combination of Woodring and Konoike fails to render claim 1 obvious, and this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woodring and Konoike and Masser (US 3131829). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 2 depends on claim 1 and is thus considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. In addition, the patent to Masser fails to supply what is missing in the combination of Woodring and Konoike. That is, Masser fails to disclose tongue and groove elements that are inclined as claimed. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woodring and Konoike and Ramsey et al. (US 5042674). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claims 3 and 4 depend on claim 1 and are thus considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. In addition, the patent to Ramsey et al. fails to

supply what is missing in the combination of Woodring and Konoike. That is, the Ramsey et al. reference fails to disclose tongue and groove elements that are inclined as claimed. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woodring and Konoike and Apps (US 4823955). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 5 depends on claim 1 and is thus considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. In addition, the patent to Apps fails to supply what is missing in the combination of Woodring and Konoike. That is, Apps fails to disclose tongue and groove elements that are inclined as claimed. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woodring and Konoike and Martin (US 4027796). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 6 depends on claim 1 and is thus considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. In addition, the patent to Martin fails to supply what is missing in the combination of Woodring and Konoike. That is, Martin fails to disclose tongue and groove elements that are inclined as claimed. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woodring and Konoike and Apps and Martin. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 7 depends on claim 1, indirectly, and is thus considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. In addition, none of Woodring, Konoike Apps

and Martin disclose tongue and groove elements that are inclined as claimed. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

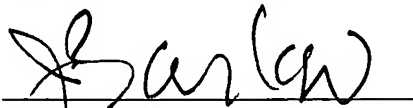
Claims 8-17 are new. Claims 8 and 9 depend on claim 1 and are considered to be patentable at least for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

Claim 10, like claim 1, recites inclination of the tongue and groove elements so that engagement of the case with another identical case requires that the case be moved along a path of engagement that is inclined with respect to the central axis. As mentioned above, this feature is not shown or suggested by any of the references of record. Therefore, claim 10 and its dependents should be patentable over the references of record.

In view of the foregoing, the applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,


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